

# Technical Management Team Meeting Notes

Reservoir Control Center Offices, Brewery Blocks

Portland, Oregon

February 2, 2005

## FACILITATOR'S SUMMARY NOTES ON FUTURE ACTIONS

Facilitator: Donna Silverberg

The following notes are a summary of issues that are intended to point out future actions or issues that may need further discussion at upcoming meetings. These notes are not intended to be the “record” of the meeting, only a reminder for TMT members.

### **Dworshak Operations:**

As follow up to the last TMT meeting, Cathy Hlebechuk, COE, asked if there were any additional questions about the COE's methodology to developing operations at the project. Dworshak reached 1557.2' at the end of January and is currently operating at minimums. The COE's February final water supply forecast is 61% of normal at the project, with end of February flood control elevation at 1570'. No additional questions were raised on this issue.

### **Response to WMP Comments/Finalization:**

The action agencies posted the final 2005 WMP and Fall/Winter Update this week. The finalization of the WMP was delayed due to consultation on the 2004 BiOp and RODs. The action agencies plan to be back on track next year and finalize the 2006 Plan in the Fall. The action agencies considered and provided responses today to some of the written comments received from Idaho, Washington and CRITFC. The responses are summarized below (details are available in the meeting minutes):

#### *CRITFC:*

- The action agencies added a paragraph on page 2 describing what is in the Fish Passage Plan and how it is reviewed, and a link to the plan (instead of combining the two plans).
- Added specificity on operating Dworshak to 1520' in September (in response to comments from CRITFC and Idaho)

#### *Idaho:*

- Struck resident from 'stranding fish' on page 5 priorities for operating reservoirs.
- Clearly indicated which BiOp (2004) was being referred to throughout the document, and references to the action agencies' UPA. In this document, there are more references to the UPA than the BiOp.

#### *Washington:*

- Clarified that there needs to be a balance between chum flows/reservoir refill and flexible power; included chum flows as a priority for flow management and reservoir operations.
- The COE agrees with WA's comment that 'refill is a high priority'. The WMP already states this.

*Other:*

- The WMP is the ‘big picture’ of how the action agencies plan to operate the FCRPS. The updates consider in-season forecasts, study plans that might impact operations and water supply specifics as soon as they are known.
- The action agencies noted that the role of TMT in discussing items in the WMP has not changed from before. There are some areas that are not issues for TMT to discuss, (e.g. re-writing the 2004 BiOp or UPA), and others that are (e.g. operations that make sense in the context of fish and reservoir conditions).
- The Fall/Winter update describes current conditions (generally below average), chum flows, burbot operations, Vernita Bar, Spring Creek hatchery release, and spring flow – operations from October 1-March 31.
- The draft Spring/Summer update will be available for discussion at the next TMT meeting, February 16.
- CRITFC noted that the action agencies’ response to CRITFC’s 2004 proposed River Operations Plan was not sufficiently specific so as to be helpful.
- The action agencies do not plan to submit formal responses in writing – instead the COE plans to use TMT as the forum to provide responses. (CRITFC noted a preference for written responses.)

#### **Spring Creek Hatchery Release:**

The USFWS had a March 3 planning date for the hatchery release. The COE requested that the operation start a day earlier to coordinate with water quality monitors scheduled to be put in place on March 1 or 2. The USFWS agreed to this request. Brad Eppert, COE, offered the COE’s recommendation: run the corner collector for four days starting 24 hours after the release to move smolts through the project (based on hydro acoustic and other monitors). The USFWS is looking at the implications and at this point, think a four day minimum and starting no later than 24-hours after the release would be acceptable. The USFWS and COE will continue coordination on this operation.

**ACTION:** Dave Wills will provide an update at the next TMT meeting.

#### **Chum Information:**

The salmon managers reviewed the data presented at the last TMT meeting and expressed concern with going below 11.9’ for downstream chum populations at this time. They are organizing a trip to do GPS survey work downstream, and would like to see modeling that shows the effect of changes in elevation at the project on downstream spawning areas. The salmon managers would like to wait to reduce the elevation until this information is gathered and they can go through the dewatering criteria noted in the WMP. Tony Norris, BOR, commented that .2’ of water at the project will likely have little effect downstream ( I-205), based on hydrologic modeling experience.

The action agencies agreed to allow two more weeks to gather information. The operation will continue at 11.9’ until the TMT revisits with new information at the next TMT meeting (Feb. 16).

**ACTION:** The COE reported they had studied the effect of Bonneville flows, Willamette flows and tide on Vancouver stage. They said Bonneville flows had little impact on Vancouver stage, the Willamette flows and tide had a major effect. The salmon managers will look at this study to see the effects.

**Status of Operations:**

*Reservoirs* – Grand Coulee is at elevation 1288.4'. Tony reminded the group that drum gate maintenance at the project is scheduled to begin April 1 and work will continue for 6 weeks, during which time Grand Coulee will be held at 1255'. Hungry Horse is at 3544.6' and close to flood control. To avoid a filling and spilling scenario, Hungry Horse might be drafted. Libby is at 2411.9' and minimum outflow. Libby was operated at speed/no load of 2500 cfs; plus spill of approximately 1250 cfs through both spill bays closing one bay resulted in increased TDG at the powerhouse and a slow decrease in TDG levels on the spillway side. Dworshak is at 1557.4' and drafting minimum flows. Albeni Falls is operating 16 kcfs out; Bonneville released 130-148 kcfs over the last week.

*Fish* – No report.

*Power* – Running to meet load.

*Water quality* – No additional reports.

**ACTIONS/NEXT MEETING AGENDA:**

*Actions from 2/2/05 meeting:*

- 'Field trip' to do GPS surveys downstream of Bonneville – salmon managers
- Modeling to show effects of elevation changes at BON to downstream chum spawning areas – COE
- Coordination on Spring Creek hatchery release – COE and USFWS

*Next TMT meeting, February 16<sup>th</sup>, 9am-noon:*

- Chum – Updated Information
- Spring Creek Hatchery Update
- Draft Spring/Summer Update WMP
- Status of Operations

***1. Greetings and Introductions.***

Chair: Hlebechuk. Facilitator: Silverberg.

***2. Chum Update.***

David Wills said FPAC has had some discussions about the redd location information presented at the last TMT meeting. Basically, we have some concerns about going below 11.9 feet, and the effects that would have on the downstream chum populations, he said. We weren't comfortable with recommending going below 11.9 feet at this time; we'd like to organize a field

trip to do some GPS measurements at the downstream spawning sites, so that we have an opportunity to do a little ground-truthing before we make a decision about dewatering criteria and where to set the tailwater level for chum incubation. We felt it would be prudent to wait a little, gather some more information, and review the dewatering criteria in Appendix 5 so that, as a technical group, we can arrive at a more informed, better decision, Wills said.

We can also survey the Ives Island-area sites, said Wills; however, we also want to look at the downstream areas. You're talking mainly about the I-205 bridge site? John Wellschlager asked. There's the Ives complex, the Multnomah Falls Creek site and the I-205 site, Wills replied. There are a lot of river miles between Bonneville and I-205, noted Tony Norris; as an engineer, I would have to say that a couple of tenths difference in Bonneville tailwater elevation would have very little effect on the elevation at I-205 – tides and local inflows from the Willamette and other systems would have 98% of that effect. If you want to press that issue, I'd like to see some actual data in support of your position, Norris said. And I think we are talking about doing that sort of modeling work, Wills replied.

Cathy Hlebecuk noted that, in reading the BiOp, it appears to her that the I-205 complex may be outside the scope of the BiOp. The BiOp covers the entire ESU, which includes the chum that spawn at I-205, Wagner replied. Essentially, it sounds as though the salmon managers would like a couple more weeks to do some of this analysis before setting the chum incubation flow, Silverberg said. And the action agencies would not oppose that idea, said Wellschlager – however, given the dwindling water supply, I don't want to give you guys false hope, in terms of how much additional water may be available for chum. I mainly don't want to give credence to a precedent that would say that small fluctuations in Bonneville tailwater depth will have an impact at I-205, said Norris. I understand, said Wills, but my concern also extends to later in the season, once emergence begins in March or April. It was agreed to revisit this topic at the February 16 TMT meeting; in the meantime, Wills said he will coordinate the above-referenced field trip for some time next week. In the meantime, the chum incubation elevation will continue at 11.9 feet, at least through the next two weeks.

### ***3. Dworshak Operations.***

The purpose of this agenda item was mainly to see whether anyone has any questions on the methodology behind the Dworshak operations, said Hlebechuk. The reservoir was at 1557.2 on January 31, about a foot above flood control. It resumed minimum outflow last night. Is it likely to stay there? asked Wagner. Unless the forecast changes – it went down from 71% in the Corps' January final forecast to 61% in the February final. The target will be 1570 at the end of February.

With respect to the forecast, said Cindy LeFleur, is that the water supply forecast? Yes, Hlebechuk replied. The River Forecast Center will also produce a forecast for Dworshak, but the Corps' forecast is the official one, used to guide Dworshak operations.

### ***4. 2005 Water Management Plan.***

Rudd Turner said the action agencies posted the final 2005 WMP and the final fall/winter update to the TMT homepage earlier this week – those documents are there for your use. We ran a bit late on these plans this year, primarily due to the consultations on the Biological Opinion. Once the ESA documents were finalized and the RODs signed, we were able to finalize the WMP. Next year, we should be back on our normal schedule.

We considered the comments from those agencies that submitted them – Idaho, Washington and CRITFC, primarily, Turner said. In response to CRITFC's comments, we added a paragraph addressing their request that we incorporate the Fish Passage Plan into the Water Management Plan; we decided not to combine the two, because they're separate plans with separate review processes – the Fish Passage Plan is coordinated through FPOM. We did add a paragraph describing the Fish Passage Plan to the beginning of the Water Management Plan, which can be found on Page 2. We also added some specificity to the language referencing Dworshak going to 1520 in September, in a couple of places in the WMP, Turner said.

Idaho had a comment about operating reservoirs to minimum outflows, said Turner; we did strike the requested language (on Page 5) in response to that comment. There was also an Idaho comment regarding which version of the BiOp we were talking about, and I think we were able to clean all of those references up, Turner said. Washington discussed chum flows and reservoir refill, and the need for a balance between them and flexible power operations; that comment was addressed in Section 2.1. WDFW also commented on the high priority for refill; we agree with that comment, said Turner.

There were a number of other comments, Turner continued; there are some things implied and stated about the role of TMT in allowing further discussion of reservoir operations for flood control. We do hope to cover some of that ground in TMT this year. Some comments did appear to be outside the scope of what TMT is typically able to address, he said; we can't rewrite the 2004 BiOp or the UPA – we can only apply them. Changing the way we do flood control, for example, is something that will have to be addressed in other forums.

Will you provide a written response to all of the comments received? Russ Kiefer asked. We don't intend to provide formal written comments, Turner replied; we had hoped to provide any responses people would like to hear at today's meeting, and memorialize them in the meeting notes. Again, the fall/winter update is now final as well; it describes current water supply conditions in the basin, chum flows, burbot operations, flood control, Spring Creek Hatchery releases and Snake River zero flow, and addresses some of the comments received on those topics.

It is frustrating, from CRITFC's perspective, that you're unwilling to provide a formal response to our comments, or to CRITFC's annual River Operations Plan, observed Kyle Martin. I have a letter addressing those concerns, said Hlebechuk. Clearly we plan to go back and look at the comments we provided, how they were addressed in the Water Management Plan, and will provide an Idaho response some time in the next few weeks, Kiefer said. In response to a question, Turner said the Corps is working on the spring/summer update to the Water Management Plan right now, and should be able to present a draft at the next TMT meeting.

Cindy Henriksen said that, to be clear, the action agencies did respond to the 2004 CRITFC River Operations Plan by letter. Thank you for the letter, said Martin, but it was very non-specific.

Wagner asked about the procedural connectivity between making operational changes and the development of the annual Implementation Plan and Water Management Plan. Tony Norris observed that there are technical issues and policy issues; any significant changes to operations are generally considered policy-type decisions, that need to be made through the Implementation Plan and the Water Management Plan. The problem is that the scope is never clearly defined, between technical and policy-level decisions, said Wagner. I'm afraid that grey area will always be there, observed John Wellschlager. Still, it may be helpful to try to spell some of that out, said Silverberg – we should be able to communicate the action agencies' thinking a little more clearly, both with respect to the grey areas and where the distinction between policy and technical is clear. The spring transport issue is one that comes readily to mind, said Wagner – we've talked about that for a couple of years now, and have been able to work it out in season, but to be able to make that work more smoothly, and avoid the process violation "red card," it would be helpful to have some process discussion ahead of time. Wellschlager said that, in his view, the spring transport issue is an example of where the process has actually worked well – we were able to work out a compromise in-season, he said.

This is a critical issue for Idaho as well, said Kiefer; it was one of our comments to the Water Management Plan, and was not really addressed. Our comment was that we look forward to participating in the discussions of best available science to inform transport decision-making, but the states and tribes, so far, have been excluded from those discussions. We have information that shows that undetected fish returned at a higher rate than transported fish from the 2002 outmigration, when the RSW was operating. That doesn't really match up with the information the action agencies and NOAA have been using to make that decision, said Kiefer, but we haven't really been given a spot at the table, at which we can influence the decisions for the fish we have management responsibility for.

Silverberg said that transport has been discussed at several recent TMT meetings; there was also some discussion of holding a symposium on that topic. True, said Kiefer, but there is also the process issue, and when we have the opportunity to provide our input to the decision-making process. It's a question of managing expectations, data collection and submittal, said Wagner – we don't want to hear that we're too late to propose a change in operations, because we missed out on a deadline to submit information to the Implementation Plan or the Water Management Plan. Wellschlager replied that while change may be more difficult to negotiate in 2005, it is certainly possible for 2006; meanwhile, the action agencies have to lay out their plans for the multi-purpose use of the system, in advance, which does impose certain timeline restrictions. He added that, in his view, there is still a great deal of conflicting information about the efficacy of transport for various stocks.

My question is, when is Idaho's opportunity to influence the discussion of how many Idaho fish will be transported, and when, said Kiefer. That's why we talked about setting up a transport symposium, Turner replied. But again, it's going to be very difficult for that discussion

to have an influence on 2005 transport operations, especially given the fact that we have not yet seen NOAA Fisheries' adult return data for 2004, Kiefer said. Again, the question, essentially, is how we frame up the issue, and get a timely discussion, so that any new information can be used to guide upcoming operations, said Wagner. There are some opportunities to exchange and discuss information at FPOM, said Turner; the part of the question I can't answer is where, exactly, that leads.

#### ***5. 2005 Fall/Winter Update.***

This topic was covered during a previous agenda item.

#### ***6. Spring Creek Hatchery.***

We received a note from Dave Wills about Spring Creek Hatchery, saying that the planning date for the release is March 3, said Hlebechuk – is there any chance that there might be any flexibility in that date? We could move it up a day, to March 2, Wills replied. Jim Adams noted that there is some question about the availability of water quality monitoring devices if the date is moved up, but said he will do his best to ensure that they will be in place.

Brad Eppard of the Corps said the plan is to run the corner collector for four days, beginning March 3, 24 hours after the Spring Creek release; there is also a need for adult attraction flow at that time. In our minds, that would be the minimum operation, said Wills. We're still doing some last-minute evaluation of the 2004 FPE information; there was general disappointment that, last year, FPE went down while the corner collector was operating. I wouldn't want to see the corner collector operation begin any later than 24 hours after the release, he said. Turner noted that Bonneville flows are expected to be about 130 Kcfs at the time of the release, so the fish won't be coming down real fast. We will ask the project to open the corner collector at whatever time you think is appropriate, Turner said. Wills said he will talk to the hatchery personnel to decide what time, exactly, the corner collector operation should begin. Wills added that there may be some budgetary issues associated with the biological monitoring program; still, we're hoping that everything will fall into place, given the fact that we can't delay the release. Turner thanked the Fish and Wildlife Service for their willingness to move the release date forward.

#### ***7. Status of Operation.***

Norris said Grand Coulee is currently at 1288.4 feet; Hungry Horse is at 3544.6 feet, close to its flood control operation. I should note that, at Hungry Horse, with the implementation of VARQ, flood control and meeting the Columbia Falls minimums drive reservoir operations at Hungry Horse, he said. VARQ limits the probability of refill at that project far more than the BiOp operation – we achieve the April 10 flood control elevation at Hungry Horse 40% of the time vs. 60% of the time. We're able to target flood control more readily now, he said. Will Hungry Horse be drafted below its current elevation? asked one meeting participant. That depends on a variety of factors, Norris replied – for example, we might increase outflow, and fall below flood control, to avoid filling and spilling at that project.

Hlebechuk said Libby was at 2411.9 feet last night, with minimum outflow; Dworshak is releasing minimum flow, and was at 1557.4 feet at midnight last night. Its February 28 flood control elevation is 1570 feet. Albeni Falls is releasing 16 Kcfs, and operating between 2055 and 2056 feet. Bonneville released 130-148 Kcfs over the past seven days. We did the line outage at Libby last week, and that worked out fine. Jim Adams said Libby released 2.5 Kcfs speed-no-load, plus about 1.8 Kcfs of spill through two bays at the beginning of the outage. Later in the outage, as TDG was creeping up, spill was reduced to about 900 cfs through one bay. TDG levels hovered between 121% and 123% during the outage.

At The Dalles, on February 22, there are a couple of line outages scheduled, so there will be a number of units out of service, and there may be some spill, Hlebechuk continued. Turner noted that there is a four-hour spill test planned at that project, on February 22, relating to the installation of a stoplog to alleviate the vortex below Bay 6.

The power system is running to meet load, said Wellschlager.

#### ***8. Next TMT Meeting Date.***

The next Technical management Team meeting was set for February 16.

#### **TMT Participant List February 2, 2005**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Donna Silverberg	Facilitation Team
David Wills	USFWS
Paul Wagner	NOAAF
Russ Kiefer	IDFG
Cindy LeFleur	WDFW
Tony Norris	USBR
John Wellschlager	BPA
Cathy Hlebechuk	COE
Cindy Henriksen	COE
Jim Adams	COE
Laura Hamilton	COE
Kyle Martin	CRITFC
Russ George	WMCI



Rudd Turner	COE
Robin Harkless	Facilitation Team
Tom Haymaker	PNGC
Nic Lane	BPA
Tim Heizenrater	PPM
Todd Cook	PPM
Don Faulkner	COE
Tom Le	PSE
Ruth Burris	PGE
Kevin Nordt	Mid-Cs
Bruce MacKay	Consultant
Lance Elias	PPL
Richelle Beck	D. Rohr & Associates
Glenn Traeger	Avista